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HOUSE APPROVES MEASURE TO CHANGE PRIORITIES AND DIRECTION FOR THE COUNTRY ON THE ENVIRONMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C. –“ With passage of the 2008 Interior Appropriations bill last night, the U.S. House of Representatives approved the changes in priorities and direction for the country on the environment that were proposed by the House Appropriations Committee, which Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) Chairs.

“This bill provides for the crucial programs that defend the cleanliness of our air, that defend the cleanliness of our water, and that protect the public health and the publicly owned natural resources of this country,” said Obey. “It makes investments to ensure that our pristine natural landscapes and historic structures will be protected, that wildfires will be

appropriately managed, and that visitors to our national parks, refuges and forests will experience, for the first time in years, improved levels of service.â€

â€œAs Aldo Leopold, Gaylord Nelson, and Sigurd Olson all understood, the most basic test of our respect for each other and respect for ourselves is the way we fulfill our stewardship responsibilities to the global environment that sustains us all,â€ Obey added, noting that the bill fulfills those stewardship responsibilities for next year in three ways:

- 1) It reverses the long time deterioration in public services and law enforcement at national parks by allowing the parks to hire 3,000 new seasonal employees and 590 new year-round staff.

2) It begins to restore investment in the clean water revolving fund, which has been slashed by more than 50% over the last three years despite that fact that there is a \$388 billion shortfall in meeting national water and sewer needs. That could help roughly 150 small communities that do not have the property tax base to modernize their sewer and water systems to comply with federal water standards.

It establishes a commission on Global Climate Change and provides it with the resources necessary to begin to implement its recommendations. It also makes climate change research a key priority, boosting federal investment in climate change research at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Interior Department and responds to the Supreme Court's landmark decision in April by compelling the EPA to begin developing a process for regulating

greenhouse gases.

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